

May 22, 2025

The Honorable Robert E. Craven, Sr.
Chair, House Judiciary Committee
Rhode Island House of Representatives
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

RE: BILL NUMBER H-6286 – AN ACT RELATING TO COURTS AND CIVIL PROCEDURE -- COURTS -- DOMESTIC ASSAULT

Dear Chairman Craven and Honorable Committee Members,

On behalf of the Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill 6286, which would require any law enforcement officer appearing before the court at an initial appearance for the prosecution of a violation of a protective order to self-certify that they have successfully completed a specialized domestic violence prosecution training course.

First and foremost, the League extends our sincere appreciation to Representative Knight for his leadership and commitment to improving the way domestic violence cases are handled at the initial court appearance stage. We recognize the importance of ensuring these sensitive and serious matters are presented by individuals equipped with the proper training, and we support the bill's overall objective of aligning practices with national best standards.

However, due to the time constraints as presently set, we respectfully request that the bill be amended to allow for a one-year transition period, from July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2026, during which initial appearances for violations of protective and no-contact orders may continue to be handled by a member of law enforcement or an attorney appointed by the prosecuting authority.

This temporary extension would give the Rhode Island District Court, local police chiefs, and municipal governments the necessary time to work through the operational and logistical details required to implement the new requirements. Specifically, it would allow communities to:

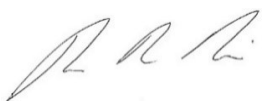
- Explore and formalize Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) between municipalities to provide Town Solicitor coverage,
- Develop or refine dedicated domestic violence calendars, and
- Coordinate resources to ensure compliance with the bill's training and prosecutorial standards.

This amendment would help strike a balance between advancing the policy goals of House Bill 6286 and ensuring municipalities have the practical tools, staffing, and intergovernmental agreements in place to succeed in the long term.

Thank you again to Representative Knight for his thoughtful sponsorship of this legislation and to the Committee for considering this possible amendment on behalf of all 39 cities and towns.

We thank the Committee for its careful consideration of this issue and welcome the opportunity to work with stakeholders to develop a sustainable and effective implementation strategy.

Sincerely,



Randy R. Rossi
Executive Director

Cc: Honorable Members of House Judiciary Committee